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ABSTRACT

The New Mexico State University Teacher Intern Program provides for 20 beginning teachers to receive half the salary of a beginning teacher for one year and to complete a 32 credit Master's Degree program in two summers and one academic year. Ten master teachers from participating school districts assist the interns in becoming successful teachers and action researchers. These teachers also teach undergraduate methods courses and supervise student teachers. In addition, arts and sciences faculty and honors undergraduate students join the research teams. The Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences provide matching funds to support research projects. This overview of the program lists examples of research topics chosen by the 1987-88 interns and describes 11 unique field experiences available to the program participants. (JD)

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COLLEGES OF EDUCATION/ARTS AND SCIENCES AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS: COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

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COLLEGES OF EDUCATION/ARTS AND SCIENCES AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS: COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

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The current call for increased collaboration among the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and local school districts has been answered by New Mexico State University through a unique partnership program. The partnership had its roots in several developments: (1) The College of Education had a history of cooperation with local school districts to develop field experiences; (2) The College of Education search committees always included both an arts and sciences and local district representative; and (3) Both national curriculum reform movements and state mandated curriculum changes necessitated cooperative efforts among the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences and the local school districts. Today the partnership among these three groups has resulted in several successful programs.

The Teacher Induction Program and Action Research

The New Mexico State University Teacher Intern Program provides for twenty beginning teachers to receive half the salary of a beginning teacher for one year and to complete a 32 credit Master's Degree program in two summers and one academic year. Ten master teachers from participating school districts assist the interns in becoming successful teachers and action researchers. These master teachers also teach undergraduate methods courses and supervise student teachers.

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Each intern's master's degree program consists of nine hours of electives, three hours of computer education, three hours of advanced methods of teachers, six hours of practica and seminar, and eleven hours of action research and thesis production. The action research and thesis production makes this a unique program.

In addition to the master teachers who assist the first year teachers, arts and sciences faculty and honors undergraduate students join the research teams. The Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences provide matching funds to support research projects.

Examples of research topics which the 1987-88 interns chose are these:

. Establishing respect for Hispanic students in the classroom.

. The effects of extra-curricular sponsorships on first-year teachers.

. The use of the close technique to improve reading instruction.

. Writing in the classroom.

. Observing developmental spelling in the first grade.

. Ability grouping and children's math performance.

. Substitute teachers are real teachers, too.

. Teacher exchange program to the Soviet Union.

. Re-entering the teaching profession.

. The relationship between the GPA of elementary school students and the GPA of students in junior high school.

. Discipline-based art education.

. Opinions of spelling: How they change with method.

. Effects of clearly stated objectives and lesson planning on the achievement of students.

. Evaluation of elementary math textbooks.

. Self-concept and its effect on reading achievement.

. Analysis of the Macmillan Series R.

Curriculum Reorganization and Reform

The State of New Mexico mandated a 36 hour professional preparation sequence for preservice elementary teachers and a 30 hour program for preservice secondary teachers. This mandate necessitated an extensive revision of both the teacher and general education program. Members of the College of Arts and Sciences faculty and local school district administrators served with College of Education faculty to complete a dynamic program. In addition, the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences at both New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico worked closely to submit similar programs to the State. The College of Education is a member of both the Holmes Group and the Council of Graduate School/AACTE Consortium, and has been actively involved in national reform efforts.

Field Experiences

The College of Education offers eleven unique field experiences. These include:

THE URBAN EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. This experience concludes with a one week practicum at the Kansas Urban Education Center (May Interim). Prior to the practicum students attend seminars which focus on urban teaching. A fee of approximately two hundred and

fifty dollars is assessed to each student to pay for room and board in Kansas City.

THE RURAL EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students devise natural history lessons that they teach to peers and to children in rural schools. A natural history lesson plan format that requires creative input is designed. A portion of the course is spent in rural schools and students are expected to travel to these schools to teach their lessons. The course is limited to 8 students.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students travel to Native American reservations to observe classes and to assist teachers. Seminars are held to explore curriculum issues.

THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students travel to prison schools to observe classes and to assist teachers. Seminars are held to explore the issues involved in teaching prison inmates. Students must be 21 and pass a security clearance.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students travel to the state of Chiapas, Mexico during May Interim to visit schools, observe classes, and assist teachers. Pre-orientation seminars are held during the Spring semester.

THE TEACHER AIDE EXPERIENCE, 1 or 2 credits. The student is placed in a school classroom or other education setting for a minimum of twenty-four hours during the semester. Students attend weekly on-campus seminars to discuss their experiences.

In the schools, students assist teachers in a variety of ways and observe classrooms in session.

THE SPECIAL NEEDS EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Concludes with a one week practicum at the New Mexico School for the Visually Impaired or the School for the Deaf. Prior to the experience students attend seminars which focus on special students. The New Mexico Schools for the Deaf or for the Visually Impaired provides room and board to participating students.

THE TUTORING EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. The student is placed on campus as a mathematics tutor. Student tutors are assigned to a three hour arithmetic/elementary algebra course and work with members of the class throughout the semester. Student tutors are also expected to attend one hour tutor meetings held once a month during the semester.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students devise environmental education lessons that they teach to peers and to children. A lesson plan format that requires creative input is designed. A portion of the course is spent at an environmental education camp and includes weekends and/or weekdays. Camping gear is needed. The course is limited to 8 students. (Available Fall only.)

THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students plan and teach lessons on natural history topics to local elementary classes.

THE ELDER HOSTEL EXPERIENCE, 2 credits. Students assist in the planning and implementation of short courses for senior citizens.

College of Arts and Science faculty and local district administrators help with the implementation of the field experiences. Preservice teachers can elect to student teach in international schools. Both College of Education and Arts and Sciences faculty who are traveling overseas assist with the supervision of these student teachers.

Minority Recruitment

One of the Partnership's goals is to create scholarships for talented minorities who wish to enter the teaching profession. Retention of enrolled minorities is enhanced by including them on the research teams. A series of other minority programs is currently being developed. For example, mentors for minority students can be appointed; community leaders can provide assistance; tutors can be provided for minority students, and special recruiting days can be organized at high schools.

Involving the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the local school districts in collaborative efforts results in numerous benefits for all participants as well as for the teaching profession.